

BOOK REVIEW

"Cancer in Children." Edited by James S. Malpin. *British Medical Bulletin*, Volume 52, Number 4, October 1996. 262 pp.

This monograph of 14 chapters is attractive in format with legible type and appropriate headings and subheadings to assist the reader. It consists of a series of reviews of pediatric cancers provided by recognized experts in the field. It covers a wide range of topics from "Recent advances in the diagnosis, prognosis, and classification of childhood solid tumors" to "Future directions in the pharmacology of anti-cancer agents in children." It does not, however, cover all common childhood cancers; most notably, retinoblastoma and Wilms tumor are absent.

The chapters are generally well written, easily read, with nicely presented tables and diagrams. Two that are outstanding are those by Pritchard-Jones on "Genetics of childhood cancer" and by Lewis on "Cancer in adolescence." The reviews are generally up to date; most include references up to 1996. The majority of the authors are from the United Kingdom, but the therapies are representative of treatments used both in Europe and in the United States.

An inherent difficulty with collections like this is the avoidance of controversial topics, and the lack of specific detail. Here, however, controversial topics are addressed in several of the reviews; e.g., screening for neuroblas-

toma and the role of ifosfamide in rhabdomyosarcoma. Also, most of the reviews have enough detail to satisfy everyone but the specialists. An exception is the chapter by Lilleyman and Pinkerton who try heroically, but there is far too much information to have lymphoblastic leukemia and non-Hodgkin lymphoma combined in one all-encompassing discussion.

The number of illustrations is modest, but they are well drawn and informative. There are nice color micrographs of fluorescence in situ hybridization of tumor chromosome aberrations, e.g., FKHR/PAX7 fusion in rhabdomyosarcoma.

The legends, however, are slightly confusing, especially to the novice with probes labeled green appearing blue in the micrographs. The tables are standard in number and appearance, and are generally easy to read. The index is comprehensive.

Overall, this is a fine monograph that is well worth reading. It should be useful to both pediatricians wanting to keep abreast of the field and to pediatric oncologists as a supplement to standard text books.

Darrell J. Yamashiro, M.D., Ph.D.
Division of Pediatric Oncology
College of Physicians and Surgeons
of Columbia University
New York, New York 10032